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THE WANT OF INDIA:

AS MANIFEST IN THE SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL DEGRADATION
OF HER PEOPLE.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

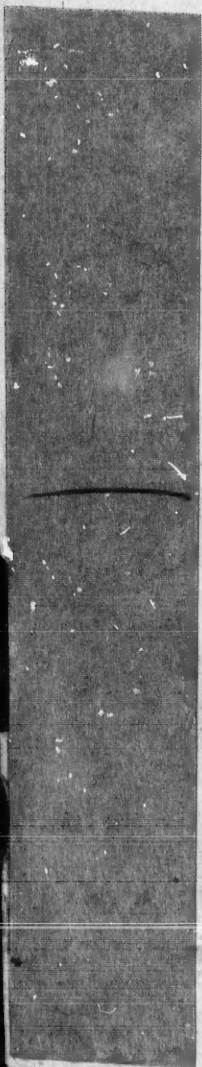
Harmonth Young Men's Christian Association,

BY

REV. GEORGE CHRISTIE.

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HALIFAX, N. S. :
JAMES BARNES & CO., PRINTERS.
1859.

Yarmouth, March 24th, 1859.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—

The Young Men's Christian Association and the public of Yarmouth in general, feel deeply indebted to you for your interesting and instructive lecture on India. That country has for a considerable time been occupying a large share of public attention. Recent events have brought to light the state of moral and social degradation under which it still lies. The question naturally arises, "What is to be done with it—what course ought the Home Government to pursue in order to secure and retain the good will of its people?" Different answers have been given by different minds. I am convinced that the course advocated in your lecture is the correct one. The Bible—and the Bible alone—freely circulated and prayerfully read—can permanently elevate and bless the teeming millions of that unhappy country. In this community, as well as in most other places, there are some who undervalue God's Holy Word. Its direct influence upon the heart they have never felt, and they are unwilling to attribute much to its indirect effects. All religious systems, they say, are nearly of equal importance. "They have many doctrines in common"—"they all serve the same purpose, and consequently each one ought to be content with his own and not trouble himself with that of others." Your lecture, I think, most successfully meets these arguments, and at the same time shows the claims of "the dark places of the earth" upon the sympathies of the Christian world. The Society is therefore unanimous in the desire that it should be published, and I may add that the community in general participate in the same feeling.

Hoping that you may be induced to comply,

I remain, respectfully and sincerely yours,

JOHN THORBURN, *Secretary.*

REV. G. CHRISTIE.

THE WANT OF INDIA.

POETS and amateur philosophers have written much respecting a fabulous period of our world's history, which they call the "Golden Age." They carry us back to the remote ages of a dim antiquity of which they know no more than other people—but which they *assume* to have been distinguished by a purer state of morals, and a degree of contentment and happiness of which, alas, society has never had experience, and which may be written. There is, however, good reason to doubt the correctness of the picture which they have drawn. The Bible at least, gives us no hint that it has ever been realized, since "mankind began to multiply on the earth." "Say now thou what is the cause that the former days were better than these, for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this."

The people of India, being, as all admit, a very ancient nation, have received a fair share of notice, so, that, if all were true that has been written and spoken, no person could fail to adopt the conclusion, that the establishment of British authority, and, particularly, interference with old customs and laws, has been to that nation a curse and not a blessing. But, more particularly, the interference of christian missionaries to undermine the ancient faith, by the introduction of the christian religion, has already proved injurious; and, if persisted in, may prove the cause of still greater misery. The class of writers to which I refer are not, indeed, anxious to force upon us the first part of this conclusion—viz., that the establishment of British authority has been injurious. The injury, as they would have us believe, arises from the conduct of those who, under British protection, have discountenanced idolatry, and endeavoured to introduce a purer wor-

ship, along with such changes in the institutions of the people, as the laws of God seem to require.

There are not many who would undertake to prove that there is any thing in Christianity, calculated to injure a human being. And those who have tried to preserve India from its influence have not found it convenient to adopt that kind of argument. Their argument is, "Christianity will excite the jealousy of the natives, and may lead to the overthrow of British authority." And then, to prove that there is no object to be gained, sufficient to justify the English in running such a risk, they endeavour to persuade the public that the state of morals and religion, in that country, is so near the standard which christianity sets up, that even christians and philanthropists may be very well satisfied with things as they are. And while there may be some who are sincere in urging such objections—having no knowledge of the country or the morals of the people, there are others ready to join them in their opposition to Christianity—simply on the ground of personal aversion to the doctrines of the Bible, and practical godliness. Hence it is that, from the days of Voltaire down to our own times, we have had men who labored to prove heathenism immaculate ; and rejected as impossible, superstitions which the most unexceptionable authorities assure us do exist.

The men in high places in the British Government who are understood to oppose the evangelization of India, are a little more guarded in their expressions, than the prince of infidels already named ; but the *animus* which they and others on their side display, is scarcely more commendable. Many of them have attempted to mislead the public mind, by one-sided quotations from the religious writings of the Hindoos—taking care to keep back other parts which, given, would most certainly have proved, that the little truth which their wise men held, has been hidden and corrupted, by the most enormous errors that ever entered into the imagination of a rational being.

Nor is this all of which the christian has to complain. While these men have found, incorporated with the ancient writings of the Hinloos, some of the doctrines of the Bible, and parts of the history of God's dealings with the children of men, they have credited these things to heathenism ; and then claimed for their sages an inspiration similar to that which the writers of the Scriptures possessed. They have found, among heathens, some sublime sentiments respecting God ; and mingled, with the masses of absurdity which their writings contain, some things are found similar to what we read in the Bible, on other subjects. These they put side by side with our scriptures—either to undermine the authority of what is known to be God's word—or to show that this revelation cannot, after all, be so very wonderful or authoritative—seeing we can find among heathens the very doctrines which christians pretend to have received as an immediate revelation from Heaven. Thus they suppose they have proved—first, the sufficiency of reason as a guide in religion—and then, that all religions have about the same authority ; or in other words, that one is about as good as another.

Now, I believe it is a fact, that some of the leading doctrines of the christian religion are to be found in the sacred books of the Hindoos. Some of their writings, though containing much that is fabulous, do really present some particulars that correspond, to a surprising extent, with the scriptural account of the advent, birth, miracles, death and resurrection of Christ. Some of the leading doctrines of the christian religion, such as the existence of God—subsisting in three Persons, the atonement, and the influences of the Spirit, are said to be found in their writings.

From what I know of the ancient mythology of the Greeks and Romans, I have no difficulty in believing that such writings exist. Truth, it has been remarked, is stranger than fiction. This may, emphatically, be said of the truths of the

Bible. Now, supposing it possible for them to obtain a knowledge of such things as are revealed in the Scriptures, we can readily understand the effect which they would have upon their minds. The taste for the marvellous would be gratified—and, by incorporating Bible stories with their own writings, they would render them more attractive. And, by the revelation of marvellous occurrences, they would command greater reverence among their countrymen.

The argument of the Infidel, in view of these things, is very different from mine. He would make them tell against the authenticity of the Bible. Accordingly, instructed by the German Rationalists, his argument would run in some such form as this—The stories which we have in the Bible about Jesus Christ, his words, and his doctrines are not veritable facts. They are myths; or fanciful representations of some peculiar ideas which were in the mind of the writer—the real nature of which we do not understand. As proof of this, he will tell us to look at India. There, you will find writings very similar to the christian scriptures; but which, being found among that ancient people, must have originated in their own imaginations; and could not have such an origin as christians claim for their Bible. Read, says the infidel, the writings of the ancient philosophic Brahmins, and there you will find doctrines like your own. And, in order to render the subject still more inexplicable, he will repeat on Brahminical authority, the huge lie—that these writings have been among the Hindoos, not for thousands, but for millions of years!

Now, in reference to all these things, we have a plain, and I think, very satisfactory answer. First, Europeans who have examined the Indian Chronology, find that it cannot be depended on, and they have reduced to thousands of years, what was formerly counted by millions. Secondly, with respect to those writings which contain portions of scripture history, and the sublime doctrines of revelation, there need be

no difficulty in accounting for their existence. All mankind are, originally, descended from the same stock. As they spread abroad over the face of the earth, they carried with them the traditions of their ancestors, and such knowledge as had, at that time, been acquired, either by the efforts of man or by immediate revelation from God. Hence, we find, among all nations, a remarkable similarity in their traditions about such events as the "Creation," the "Fall of man," the "Flood," and other important facts of history. Here, then, is one source of the knowledge of the Hindoo wise men.

In the next place, let us remember that India had the means of extending that knowledge which at first was confined to traditions. In my former lecture, I showed that India had been visited, for commercial purposes, more than a thousand years before the Christian era. It had also been the theatre of wars, brought to them from the West, by Darius and Alexander. Between two and three centuries before the Christian era, the Old Testament Scriptures were translated into Greek. Those Scriptures, we know from history, were very extensively circulated; and every man familiar with history, is aware that the effect of their being read was to produce a very general expectation of the appearance of ONE in our world who, though in human form, was also described in the glowing language of prophecy as the "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

This story about a coming Saviour very soon spread so widely that before the time of Christ's appearing, it had been stolen from the Jewish Scriptures to be engrafted upon the heathen literature of that period. Let any person for example read the 4th Eclogue of Virgil which was written about forty years before Christ came into our world, and he will be able to judge of the influence which the Old Testament Scriptures had begun to exert upon the minds of men. The poem referred to is addressed to Pollio a noble Roman, on occasion

of the birth of a son. But the language is such as could never have had its fulfilment in one who was only man—and therefore all competent critics believe that he wrote with Isaiah's picture of Jesus before his mind.

Again, the sybilline oracles among the Romans and Greeks were at this time borrowing from the page of Prophecy, to exalt their credit among the people. In fact, in every country of which we have particular information, we find that, at that time, the scripture doctrine of the Messiah was attracting attention and exerting an influence. The "wise men from the East" who saw "His star," and "came to worship Him", may not have come from India ; but if not, it was from a country in that direction. They came too, influenced by the reports which had been gathered from the Jewish Scriptures. And it is only reasonable to suppose that a country, as far advanced as India in the knowledge of philosophy, would be attracted by the strange story which had got abroad over the world, by the translation of the Jewish Scriptures into one of the most widely spoken languages of that day.

Moreover, India was visited at a very early period, by Christian missionaries. According to the generally received tradition, the Apostle Thomas labored in India. Other names are also given of christian ministers who labored among that people. We find the name of a Bishop of India among those who were present and subscribed the proceedings of the Council of Nice, A. D. 325.

Mohammedans admit that Christianity had been planted in India before their religion. In fact, there is reason to believe that ever since the days of the Apostles, there have been some Christians in that country. In 1867 Dr Buchanan found a society of 200,000.

Can we not, now, understand how it comes to pass that the writings of the Hindoos contain some doctrines and historical statements similar to what we have in the Bible? The love

of all rude nations for the marvellous would be sufficient to create an interest in the stories which we have in the Scriptures; and, as we saw in the case of the "Sybilline oracles," they would naturally borrow from such writings whatever they thought most likely to excite the wonder of the people. With respect to the pretended antiquity of their writings, I have already observed, that this is denied by men who investigated their chronology, altogether independent of the question before us. The dates of events as given in the histories of ancient nations, (are so uncertain) that a person can make nearly what he pleases out of them. The following remarks by the authors of the History of British India are sufficient in my opinion to settle the question of Indian dates. They say—
 "There is one circumstance which breaks, at once, the spell of this imaginary duration (being over millions of years). Although India possesses nothing which can approach to the character of history, many of her princes and great men preserve lists of kings, which, from their coincidence, though found in different and distant quarters, appear to be substantially correct. These extend through the whole of the three ages into which their chronology has been divided, but, instead of the almost endless roll of names which ought to have been supplied during two millions of years, we find by Mr Bentley's list, in the "Treta," only sixty-six, and in the "Dwapar," forty-seven kings: consequently, the potentates of the first period must have had an average reign of 19,636, those of the second, of 18,383 years. But, if we assign to the Indian monarchs the average of human life, we shall reduce these ages to an extent perfectly consistent with European history, and the Mosaic records.

Sir Wm. Jones expresses his belief that "the old Indian astronomers had made more accurate calculations than appear in their books, but concealed their knowledge from the people, with a view to impose on them in regard to the antiquity of their nation."

But there is another argument bearing upon the subject to which Infidels, at least, cannot very consistently object. It is this—Some of the doctrines which we find incorporated with

the writings of the Hindoos have invariably been denied by the men who reject the authority of the word of God—because, they say, they are contrary to reason. We find, for example, in their writings, a statement of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, this I firmly believe, is a doctrine that till revealed “never entered into the heart of man.” We believe it, not because we can reason it out, but solely, *because we find it in the Bible*. Where, then did the Hindoo get it? Common sense, and common honesty, can give but one reply—“*the Bible*.”

We are then justified in assuming that those passages in the Hindoo Books which contain doctrines similar to what we have in the Bible, are not the products of the Hindoo mind; but, at some period or other, have been learned from those who enjoyed the benefit of divine communications. And if even the little which they now possess is not the fruit of their own reasoning, it is vain to expect that their pretended teachers will be able to do more for them in the time to come.—The conclusion therefore is evident that they ought to be furnished with the heavenly oracles, a knowledge of which makes wise unto salvation, and secures many advantages even in the present life.

But my audience will perceive more clearly my reason for maintaining that India should be visited with the light of Christianity, when I show how utterly useless, and even ruinous those scraps of christian truth must be to the people, in general—overlaid as they are, with mountains of error. I do not know a single article of the christian faith which has not been so entirely corrupted, as to make it the seed of some awfully degrading or ruinous error. Important truths have been used as food for a wild and impure imagination, till the literature of the people has been so blasted and defiled as to prove a curse to them instead of a blessing. Even those truths which suggest themselves to the mind independent of religion alto-

gether—such as the “existence of God” have been seized upon, by their philosophers and professed religious teachers ; and, either to suit the prejudices of the corrupt heart, or to enable them to retain their hold of the popular mind, they have been so completely corrupted, as to prove utterly useless. Yes, my hearers, that nation respecting whose religion and philosophy Infidels speak with so much respect, instead of worshipping “one God the maker of Heaven and earth,” have over three hundred and thirty millions !

I will now read to you a part of the description which the Apostle Paul gives of Heathenism. It is applied, as you are aware, to the inhabitants of ancient Greece and Rome,—and it is not less strikingly descriptive both of ancient and modern heathenism, in India.

Rom.1. 18—25. 18th “For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold (i e, detain or keep back) the truth in unrighteousness ;

19th. “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20th. “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse :

21st. “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22nd. “Professing themselves to be wise they became fools,

23rd. “And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24th. “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves :

25th. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

Before we proceed, it may be as well to glance at the leading ideas contained in this portion of Scripture. In the first place, it appears that there are some truths which may be discovered without the aid of revelation—truths that force themselves, as if, upon the minds of beings constituted as we are. These convictions have a twofold origin, viz., the study of the works of God in creation, and that internal light which we call conscience. That knowledge to which the Apostle particularly refers is what may be acquired respecting God—such as his “eternal power and Godhead.” Unbiased reason easily conducts to the conclusion that there is a God. The existence of the natural world suggests the fact, to a reflecting mind—for it has to choose between this doctrine and that which is far harder to believe—“the eternity of matter.” Conscience also has something to do with the establishment of this conviction in the mind. For it is harder than people often think, to set aside the quiet testimony of this inward monitor. And so complete therefore is the proof for the existence of God, that many have declared it impossible for a reflecting person to disbelieve. The Scriptures pronounce him a fool that denies the existence of a God. Now, the same considerations that tend to establish the belief that there is a God naturally lead to the farther conclusion that He must possess boundless perfections: hence the Apostle says “His eternal power and Godhead are understood by the things which are made.”

We are not, however, taught in these words that reason, unaided by Divine revelation, can conduct us to a perfect knowledge of the divine character. The Apostle goes no farther than to say “*that which may be known of God*, from such sources as I have just indicated, may be discovered by a heathen, i. e., “His eternal power and Godhead.” Reason tells us that the being that could call matter into existence, and form a world such as we inhabit, must be infinite in power

and majesty. A process of reasoning from the works of God must also conduct to the conclusion that he is a wise and a benevolent Being. All this then, *may* be known of God, by one who has not access to the inspired volume. But there are other perfections of the Divine Being, respecting which the "book of nature" gives us no information. I refer to what are called the moral attributes of the Deity—such, for example, as those by which he made himself known to his servant Moses. Ex. 34. 6, 7, "The Lord God merciful and gracious &c." In short, all those qualities of the divine nature which are brought to view in the revelation of mercy made in the Gospel, and the arrangements of God for giving effect to his purposes of love, as connected with the mediation of Christ.

There are yet two important truths, contained in the words of the Apostle now under consideration, that must not be overlooked. We are told that the Gentile or Heathen world—notwithstanding all their knowledge of God, had sunk down into a state of disgusting immorality. Abusing even that knowledge of God which they possessed, they fell into idolatry, and from this, into gross crimes, ver. 24. And lastly, we find that the men who had risen so far above the level of the common mind as to be sensible of the folly of the worship rendered to idols, and who had, by "reason," got possession of the truth that "there is a God," shut their own hearts against its influence, and withheld from their fellow-men that truth in which all are so deeply interested.

This is a sketch of Heathenism, as given by an inspired hand. How far it applies to India, you may judge as we proceed. Those of my audience who are familiar with the history of ancient Greece and Rome must acknowledge that the description here given of the belief of their philosophers, and the morality of the people in general is true to the very letter. Let this consideration then be before your minds, in connection with another undeniable fact, viz, that in all ages, and

among all nations, in the same stages of mental and social advancement, there has always been a striking similarity, both in the character of their idolatrous worship, and the morality of the people by whom these rites are practised.

Let me now call your attention to the real condition of India.

One of the arguments offered in our day against any attempts to evangelise India is, that they have a religion already—that their “sacred books” contain many doctrines very similar to what we have in the Bible; and that their system of morals is very little inferior to that of Christians. The supporters of this opinion, as I have already observed, endeavour to prove it by quotations from the writings of the Brahmins. Now I admit that their writings contain passages corresponding with the Scriptures. I should rather say that extracts may be found which might be considered as bearing such a construction, were it not that they stand in close connection with other statements so unspeakably absurd, that any attempt to reconcile one statement with another is absolutely perplexing. For example—the following passages which seem to refer to a supreme Being might be accepted as evidence that they believe in the existence of God similar to that Divine Being whom Christians worship.—“Oh mighty Being, who art the prime Creator eternal God of gods, the worlds mansion! Thou art the incorruptible Being distinct from all things transient, Thou art before all gods—the ancient Pooroosh (i.e. vital soul) and the supreme supporter of the universe. Thou knowest all things and art worthy to be known. Thou art the supreme mansion and by thee, Oh infinite Form the universe was spread abroad, &c.”

Again, the following is said to be taken from one of the sacred books of the Hindoos. “As God is immaterial, he is above all conception—as he is invisible he can have no form; but, from what we behold of his works, we may conclude that

he is eternal, omnipotent, knowing all things, and present every where." The above quotations I have selected from a large number given by different authors. They are the most satisfactory to our ears because the language most resembles Scripture phraseology. Here is another, pretty good—"Let us adore the supremacy of that divine sun the Godhead, who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress towards his holy seat &c."

If we could stop here, it would, I think, be fair to conclude that a nation recognizing a supreme Being, in language so satisfactory, might be considered as enjoying the benefit of this great central doctrine. Supposing the translation to be correct, we might infer that they believed in the existence of "God almighty, the maker of heaven and earth." But when we look farther into their writings, we have melancholy proofs that the doctrine, if ever believed, has, for perhaps two thousand years been so completely enveloped in the clouds of a darkened understanding as to render it impossible that it could have exerted any beneficial influence upon the minds of the people. Strikingly true, as respects India, is the declaration of the Apostle—"The world by wisdom knew not God."

One of the first stumbling blocks seems to have been those very attributes to which there is such a beautiful reference in the above quotations.——If God is infinite he must necessarily be omnipresent. Now, evidently, one of the first difficulties was to understand how God could be everywhere—even in that part of space which is occupied by material bodies. And the way they solved the difficulty was, by concluding that matter and God are all one. Accordingly by following the doctrines of their sacred books in which they appear to be speaking of God, we find that it is not a personal God, such as the Scriptures make known. On the contrary, the material world is deified.

Here are some extracts from the "vedas," which will show that my statement is correct, The first is an address to Indra or the clouds.——"Oh Indra there is no God thy superior, none more powerful than thou art, nor indeed Oh slayer of Uritra ! is there one that can be put on a level with thee."

"O thunderbolt wielding Indra ! were there a hundred heavens and a hundred earths, and in addition to them a thousand suns, and any other supposable creatures, they could not contain thee ; for thou encirclest heaven and earth."

Here again are parts of addresses to the sun, under the names of Adita and Savita.

"Truly thou art mighty O sun ! truly thou art mighty, descendant of Adita, we adore the splendor of thy essence, thy majesty and thy glory : for mighty art thou Oh divine sun."

"I worship the god Savita, parent of Heaven and earth, who superintends the sacrifices of the wise."

Here is part of an address to the Ocean.

"We, desirous of wives, and desirous of sons, ever first to move the sacrifice the givers of distinguished gifts invoke the God Oceanus.

Next we have the adoration of fire (called Agni,)

"Oh Agni, thou art to us the chief of the gods, our Saviour the conferrer of bliss, the subject of our higher praises."

Another Deity is Soma, the moon plant wine. (The moon plant is said to contain a juice which is capable of being converted into a powerful intoxicant.)

"Soma is flowing down pure ; he is the creator of intellect, the creator of heaven, the creator of earth, the creator of the sun, the creator of fire, the creator of India. Soma, when he goes sounding to the holy place, is Brahma among the gods ; the fixer of their respective merits, among the poets ; the Bishi among the Brahmins ; the buffalo among the horned animals ; the hawk, among the vulture tribe ; the sword, among cutting instruments. Soma who was the inward soul and is the rainer of felicity sits down among us with his unmatched strength,

and is *well skilled in the matter of cows.*" And thus, the "juice God" as he is called in another part of this invocation, is raised to the same distinction as Indra and Agni, both of which are honoured with the assurance that they are supreme !

After these extracts, it appears to me impossible that any person can suppose the Hindoos to have any idea of a Supreme Being as men need to have, in order that they may render to him, as their creator and God, acceptable worship : and yet it is a fact, that some will come forward and ask us to withhold the Bible from those people, under the pretence that their own writings are sufficient for their spiritual and social advancement. Verily these men can have thought little upon that sublime announcement of the sacred volume—"God is a Spirit ; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

We need have no difficulty in understanding why men such as Voltaire, or men of the Ellenborough-Stanley school should have a leaning to Hindooism, in preference to Christianity. Its morality is vastly more accomodating than the Christianity of the Bible. Moreover, if the vedas and shastras of India may be recognized as of equal authority with the Bible, there will then be a more plausible excuse for treating all religion with contempt. But there is still another reason that may influence such men in preferring Hindooism to Christianity. There is always satisfaction in finding that others hold views similar to those which we profess to entertain. Now, the peculiar phase of the heresies of the present day has a very remarkable counterpart in the religion of the Hindoos. For example, the German school of Infidels, of the present century, and this is by far the most numerous of those classes which reject the authority of the Bible, have arrived just about at the same landing place where we find the Hindoos that lived 2000 years ago ; and where that part of them now is who believe in the "sacred books" of their professed teach-

ers. Pantheism was the religion of the ancient Hindoos—and Pantheism is now the prevailing form of belief, among those who reject the authority of the Word of God.

It is generally affirmed that the Hindoos teach the doctrine of the "immortality of the soul." It would however be more correct to say, merely, that they believe in its future existence. They hold that it exists after death, but they do *not* hold the doctrine, as taught in the Scriptures. Their doctrine is—not that the soul is immortal, but divine. The soul, according to them, is not a creation which will never be annihilated, but is a part of God. After leaving the body, it will enter into another—corresponding with the character of the person, if virtuous it may next be born a goat or a cow—if pious a man—if saintly, a Brahmin. If the person have been wicked, his soul will first pass into some animal whose disposition he most resembled. The thief is converted into some animal addicted to stealing the articles that he had been in the habit of appropriating. Thus the pilferer of grain is metamorphosed into a rat—while he who stole roots or fruit, becomes an ape. The soul, as they suppose must pass through a variety of such changes as I have mentioned, until it has either made atonement, by suffering the punishment of its crimes or has been sufficiently purified ; and then it is absorbed in the divine nature.

On this subject, an eloquent writer makes the following remarks. "Man, in mutilating truth by metempsychosis, has grievously wounded himself. He learns not to kill cows, but he learns at the same time not to pity afflicted men. His new doctrine protects the monkey, but curses the widow ; saves the crow, but execrates the cripple. You must not kill a scorpion, for it may be your father ; and you must not pity a leper, for his disease only tells what a miscreant he has been. Thus while animal life is saved, human hearts are hardened, and human woes made doubly bitter."

The doctrine of "future rewards and punishments" is not discarded from the religion of the Hindoos ; but it would be impossible to gather from their writings any such representation of their belief as would be, in all respects, satisfactory. I do not find sufficient to satisfy me that they believe in the doctrine of eternal punishment. Their idea of punishment is that it is corrective—intended to act as a purifier. Sometimes, it is described in such a way as to make us think of the purgatory of the Papist ; and in reading other parts of these ancient writings, we almost imagine that we have fallen upon that mine of ancient lore from which such men as Ballou, Chapin, and Theodore Parker have drawn their inspiration.

I may add that people who do not relish the doctrine of future punishment, and yet do not want to "break off their sins by righteousness," will find in these writings some very interesting suggestions. For example, we have an account of a very wicked man—"whose mouth," as the Apostle would say, "was full of cursing and bitterness." Even the superior gods did not escape the lash of his profane tongue. He was too bad altogether. The gods could stand it no longer. He was killed, with the intention of sending his soul to the place of punishment—when lo ! it is found that the impious wretch has made such free use of the name of one of the superior gods, in uttering his curses, that he escapes punishment altogether. For, so different is their doctrine from the Law promulgated from Mount Sinai, which denounces certain punishment against him who "takes the name of God in vain," according to the above account, the frequent repetition of the name had such a virtue in it that the man got to heaven in spite of the god !

Before making any farther remarks respecting the religious belief of the Hindoos, it may be profitable to make some inquiries respecting their *morality*. In judging of any religious system, it would be quite unfair to overlook its effects upon

the moral character of those by whom it is received. If the adherents of any system exhibit an unexceptionable moral character, then, it is only fair to conclude that their religious belief, however imperfectly stated in words, must in its main features be correct and safe. On the contrary, if the morals of a people be degraded and vicious, then there is good reason to judge unfavourably of their religion. And especially must this be the case, when such exceptionable conduct is found to agree with the doctrines of their "sacred books."

The apologists for heathenism, at all events, have no right to complain, if we should apply this test to that system which they have taken under their special protection. And, should the defenders of Christianity hesitate to submit their creed to the same practical test, they would, in so doing, dishonour their Lord and Master: for this is, in fact, the rule that He has given for trying all religion, and all religious systems.—*"By their fruits ye shall know them."*

On the subject of heathen morality, many fine things have been written and spoken to which I have only one objection—and that is—*They are not true.* Every person who is conversant with the writings of the ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome will readily admit that *they* have said a great many complimentary things respecting morality, in the abstract.—But, in the first place, they have given abundant evidence that they did not understand the principles of true morality or virtue. Compared with the standard of true virtue contained in the Scriptures, theirs is absolutely mean. Cicero, for example, tells us that "virtue proposes glory as its chief end, and looks for no other reward." Zeno maintained that "all crimes are equal, and that a person who has offended or injured us should never be forgiven." Aristippus affirmed that, "as pleasure was the chief good a man might practise theft, sacrilege, or adultery, as he had opportunity." Even the famous Socrates, of whom Infidels speak as if he were almost a

demigod, is not above the suspicion of having been a person of rather easy morals. There are some fine sentiments in his writings; but history gives us more than these, by which we are to try his character. Respecting him, the late Dr. Dick of Glasgow makes the following remark—"The visit which he paid to an Athenian courtesan to see her beauty, and to teach her more perfectly the arts of seduction—and the profane oaths with which his conversation was interlarded, with some other particulars in his history, place him at an immense distance from the lowest member of a Christian Church;" and this is the mark that some people call the "inspired Socrates!" Whether the vaunted wisdom of the Brahmins has done more for them than the philosophers of Greece and Rome achieved for their country, we shall see bye and bye.

It is a remarkable fact that the writings and oral teachings of the Ancient Philosophers seemed to accomplish nothing beneficial, either for the men themselves, or for the people in general. Some of them maintained in their writings the "unity of God," in opposition to Polytheism; but after all, they seemed to be groping in darkness, as if they knew not what to believe, or what to practice. Even the "divine Socrates" is not clear of the charge of favouring the idolatry of his country.—One of his last charges to his friend, was to offer the usual sacrifice to the god Esculapius; and any explanation of his conduct which can be offered must still leave him chargeable, either with believing in the efficacy of such idolatrous worship, or seeking to retain his popularity among the people, by concealing from them his real sentiments.

After all that the apologists for the ancient philosophers can say, either respecting the men or their doctrines, the page of history will still present the undeniable fact that, after their schools of philosophy had existed for centuries, the gods of the common people, instead of being disowned or reduced in number, were greatly multiplied, so much so as to give occasion

to the remark of a satyrist that, "in Greece, it was easier to find a god than a man." The number of their gods was about thirty thousand!

If philosophy be such a safe guide in religious matters as some of the disbelievers in the Bible pretend, how are we to account for the fact that it has, in every instance, proved powerless in reforming either the religious belief, or the morality of the nations, where it has been most cultivated? It has not been so among any people who have read the Bible. One of the immediate effects of the proclamation of the truth, we are assured by the prophet, would be the destruction of idol worship. "The idols he shall utterly abolish."

When the Apostles went forth under the commission of their divine Master, they announced plainly the doctrine of the existence of one God. They condemned idolatry as absurd and dishonouring to the Most High—and taught, in opposition to long-standing errors, that "they should turn from idols to the service of the living and true God:" and everywhere, the Dagon of Paganism fell before the God of the Christian.

John Williams, not a great many years ago, went to the South Sea Islands, with the Bible in his hand. He read and explained it to the natives; and only a few years elapsed before thousands and tens of thousands of those degraded cannibals renounced idolatry, and "cast their idols to the moles and to the bats." And ever since, under the influence of Christian instruction, the people have been advancing in knowledge, in morality, and in all those social improvements which are connected with the happiness and elevation of society.

But what is the moral and social condition of India? The answer to this question is painful, but it must not be withheld. It is like the moral character which they ascribe to their gods. A gentleman, speaking of India, puts the question—"Is there such a strong bias in human nature to virtue, that a man will be pure in spite of the example of his gods—and when the

very services of his temple present the most fascinating temptations to impurity?" "No parent, watchful of the morality of his children, would allow them to read the books to which the people of India devoutly resort for heavenly instruction." There are few, if any, crimes against High Heaven or human society that cannot, according to Eastern Mythology, claim the patronage of one or more of the gods of India—while, as a general rule, all are represented as, occasionally at least, playing fast and loose with the principles of morality. We have, in Indian Mythology, all the impure and abominable stories with which the students of Greek and Roman literature are acquainted. There is scarcely one of the gods of these nations whose history I dare relate, in the presence of such an audience as is now before me. Even Jupiter, the supreme god as they believed, is charged with immoralities which would stamp the character of any man among us with eternal infamy, and exclude him from respectable society. But the Indian Mythology is still more gross and revolting. So unutterably impure are some of the legends respecting their gods, and the conduct of their blinded and degraded worshippers, that the men who have undertaken either to translate the so called "sacred books," or to give an account of the morals of the people, have been obliged frequently to drop their pen—and, instead of giving us all they have read or witnessed, they throw a cover over the loathsome mass, and exhibit to us but the border of the heap of impurity. And, in a few general hints, they give us an idea of what is kept back—evidently feeling that a language like the English, which is so extensively employed in addressing the throne of the Almighty, and winging heavenward the orisons of so many Christian hearts, in pure worship, ought not to be defiled, by making it the vehicle of such offensive and impure ideas as pour out from the sinks of Brahminical pollution.

An Indian missionary (Arthur) has stated that—"In the

Purana legends of the amours, envies, and errors of the gods, we have, from the creator down, a record of turpitude far exceeding that of any prison in existence. Deeds we should blush to name are sung in lofty verse, and as the performance of glorious godhead." *And these forsooth are the people who "do not need the Christian's Bible, being sufficiently well accommodated with their own religious books"!!*

The writings of the Hindoos seem to be prepared for the very purpose of obliterating any distinction that may exist in the mind respecting the difference between good and bad actions. Here is a short extract, illustrating what I mean.—
 "In a certain town lived two merchants, bosom friends, who met daily, after business, to enjoy each others society. On parting, one of the friends, being devout, went to the temple: the other, being licentious, went to the home of the priestesses. Thus matters proceeded till they both died, when the devotee was sent to hell, and the libertine was received to heaven." The explanation of this piece of Brahminical theology is too long to give, but any Hindoo reading the story, would feel that his best chance of getting to a place of happiness was to indulge in sinful gratifications at the present time.

Now, the general state of morals in India is just what might be expected of human beings subject to such unholy influences as we have seen surround those people. There is not a commandment of the Decalogue that is sacred in their eyes. All reliable writers assure us that their morals are as bad as in any heathen country of which we have any knowledge. And it would be strange if things were otherwise. When the people are taught that the exhibition of immoral conduct is acceptable to the gods, and when, in fact, the very ceremonies of religion over which these priests preside, are of an impure character, what can be more probable than that the general morality of the worshippers would correspond with what they learn on such occasions?

There is no part of the worship of those people that can be considered as favourable even to morality, much less to the exercise of that spirituality of mind, and purity of heart, which constitute essential elements in the worship of God, But it is when we are introduced to the interior of their temples, that we get a true idea of what Heathenism is. Approaching these however, we are reminded of the words of the Apostle, as applied to another place, though the language is equally applicable to India—"It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. The place to which the Apostle alluded was the temple Diana, at Ephesus. And the scenes to which he referred were those that transpired there, under the name of the Elusinian mysteries." The principal deity worshipped at Ephesus was Diana—just as Minerva was the goddess at Athens, and Venus at Corinth. A description of the practices at one of these places would be a description of the whole? And that description would apply to the temple worship in India. Now in Corinth, for example, we get an idea of the state of morality in heathen countries, from an account of the laws made to regulate the worship at the temple of Venus. It was enjoined, by law that one thousand beautiful females should officiate as courtezans or public prostitutes before the altar of that goddess. This was one principal source of the revenue of the place. In India matters are no better than this, as the missionaries testify. India is still, to a large extent, a heathen country; and evils such as these will only be removed, when that nation is taught the pure Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Arthur, in his work on Missions, says that, "in some of the temples, excesses are, at certain times openly committed which would be concealed even in our lowest dens of vice."

There is another view of the moral state of India to which I find very few writers making any particular reference, and yet to my mind, it presents that country in one of its very

darkest aspects. I have somewhere met the remark that the three sweetest words in the English language are *Mother*, *Home* and *Heaven*. There are few in this audience who would not respond heartily to this delightful sentiment. The person who cannot do so is destitute of some of the best qualities that distinguish man from the inferior creation. But while these words have fallen upon our ears as the sweet music of Angels, we have not always reflected upon the influence which the Bible has exerted in imparting to them the peculiar power which they exercise over us. The Bible sanctions and sanctifies those unions which bind families together; and which make the family circle deserving of the name of Home. God himself defined the position which the wife and mother should occupy in that circle when He said—Likewise ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge; giving honour to the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life.”

In Indian society, such a picture as I have now drawn is never realized. The wife and mother there is never treated as an equal. From the time she leaves the parental roof and enters the house of her husband, she is treated as an inferior being. She dare not walk beside her husband, on the street; she can only follow. Whatever her quality, she is not permitted to ride in the same vehicle, except it be on a long journey. She cannot sit down beside him in the house. She is not allowed to eat with him. When the food is prepared he sits down alone—his wife generally has to serve him. After he is satisfied, she silently carries away what is left, and eats in a separate apartment. Yes, my hearers, little as you may have thought of it—none of us should forget that even the “family board,” which gives half the zest to our ordinary meals, is another of the blessings which we owe to the Gospel.

The female in India is treated with such manifest disrespect,

that they only conceive of the life she leads as one of bitterness : and for all the indignity which is heaped upon her, the husband finds authority in those writings which some would persuade us are a suitable substitute for the Bible. The Skanda Purana, one of their sacred books, says " Let the wife who wishes to perform sacred ablutions, wash the feet of her husband and drink the water ; for a husband is to a wife greater than Shankara or Vishnu. *

Should she be left a widow, she is not permitted to marry again, and she has before her a life of bitterness. Perhaps she is charged with her husband's death, or she is told that he has been taken away, to punish her sin in a former body. She is treated with cruelty by every person. The Bible tells us that one of the manifestations of a religious spirit, is the exercise of compassion toward that class. " True religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction"—the religion of the Brahmins on the contrary, teaches him to execrate and despise the widow.

No finite mind can estimate the amount of injury resulting from such causes as have now been pointed out. The persons themselves might, reasonably enough, desire death rather than such a life. But they are not the only victims of that devilish system of irreligious teaching that prevails throughout India. The children of these mothers are launched upon society, without that previous instruction and preparation which none can give so effectually as a mother—which none will take the trouble to give, but those who possess the capacity and who, at the same time, are governed by an all-controlling love which will be turned aside by no difficulty. We have scarcely ever heard of a great and good man who did not attribute much of that superiority by which he was distinguished, to an

* If the Hindoos have a name for Jesus Christ it is this word Vishnu.

intelligent and pious mother. Now, while India continues as it is, we may, indeed, expect to hear of some who have earned for themselves fame and notoriety ; but it will not be the fame which follows a good and virtuous and philanthropic man through life, and after death, rises, like incense from his tomb. It will be such fame as attaches to the soul of a Nena Sahib, who could find diversion in inflicting a hundred deaths upon each of the hapless ones that may fall a victim to his cruelty.

The women of India must themselves be educated, before they can accomplish the mission which God has assigned to woman, in this world. One part of the execrable system which prevails in India—sanctioned too by the authority of their “sacred books”, is to withhold instruction from the female sex. The authors of the History of British India say—“Every avenue by which an idea could possibly enter their minds is diligently closed. It is unlawful for them to open a book. They must not join in the service of the temples. And any man, even their husbands, would consider himself disgraced by entering into conversation with them.”

There is just one class who form an exception to this rule. We saw as you remember, that the temples in India are always supplied with a number of females who have sacrificed to the objects of idolatrous worship that which is more valuable than human life. These “temple-women,” as they are called, are trained for the part which they have to act: and, as a preliminary, they receive an education. Arthur, whom I have quoted more than once, says “Except the hapless girls destined to the profession of “temple-women” no female is permitted to learn to read or write.”

Let the person who is disposed to think lightly of the privileges and enjoyments for which we are indebted to the Bible and Christianity, recal the facts which have been brought forward at this time. Let him who despises the sacred volume, and pleads for the supremacy of reason, and affirms its

sufficiency to meet all the wants of human society, turn to the pages of Greek and Roman history—or to the annals of India ; and, if these do not convince him of his error, I will believe that he is blind, *because he hates that blessed* } book to which he, in common with all present, is indebted for the most precious privileges which he enjoys, in this world—and to which we owe our hope of a blessed immortality, beyond the grave.

The women of christian lands, especially, ought not to forget the privileges which christianity has conferred upon their sex. They should also endeavour to comprehend the responsibility as well as the honor of the station which God has marked out for them. And, while occupying their station with becoming dignity, let them not forget to exercise all their influence for the advancement of morality and religion, and all that tends to make a community honorable and happy. You will not need, for this purpose, to get up “Woman’s Rights” conventions. If you are christians, you will have no confidence in any such measures as we sometimes read of among our American neighbours. The Bible, and not those societies, has brought you the privileges which you enjoy. Hold to the Bible still, as your “Magna Charta.” Honor it. Reverence it. Teach your children to follow your example. Then, you will get all the privileges and honors which it claims for you—and beyond this, there is nothing to which you can really be entitled.

And shall I refuse, in this place, to plead the cause of those unhappy daughters, wives and widows in degraded India, who enjoy not the privileges with which you are favored? No, they must not be forgotten—more especially, as now, the Empire of India is a part of Her Majesty’s dominions just as we are. By the ties of a common nature, then, and by the ties of earthly government, they are our sisters ; and should excite our interest and have a place in our prayers. About

twenty years ago, some English ladies formed a society for their benefit, which has already accomplished good, in some places. But there is vastly more to be done. May not Nova Scotia yet have the honour of doing something for the people of the East? We can, at least, do something in the way of collecting funds to aid in the circulation of the Scriptures; and we can pray for the diffusion of light in that degraded country.

But, in speaking of human miseries as attendant upon Heathenism, we cannot confine our remarks to one sex. We may adopt, in reference to India generally, the strong language of the Apostle, and say, The whole nation is "groaning and travelling in pain," under the crushing weight of Pagan idolatry, and its dire effects. The wail of misery and hopeless wretchedness is ever ascending from that benighted land. And never will the evil be cured, till the "Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings," and dispel the gross darkness which in the mean time, envelopes that people. Instead of the Ganges and other sacred streams to which thousands now resort for the purpose of procuring relief for a troubled conscience—which even a heathen often experiences, we must open for these guilty perishing men, a Bethesda, hard by the temple of God—where they shall be healed, by the virtue of those living waters which have their source, at the foot of the "Throne of God and the Lamb."

Lord Stanley, a few months ago, replying to a Deputation of christians that represented most of the religious denominations of Great Britain, was silly enough, and imprudent enough to express himself in such a way as to show that he sympathised with the class who profess the infidel opinions which I have this evening endeavored to examine and weigh. In that reply he manifested an entire want of sympathy with the religious feeling of Great Britain and America; and at the same time, disposition to claim, for India, a certain kind of

superiority over the nations of Europe—under the pretence that she possessed a more ancient creed than theirs ; and that her forms of belief were not less deserving of respect than those of christian nations. Now, I do not say that he and others likeminded, are perfectly aware that such statements are false and foolish ; but I do say that men who can look at India as it is, and yet hold such language, show themselves utterly incapable of fathoming the depths of the human heart, or interpreting those signs of feeling which everywhere present themselves to a reflecting mind. Humanity has cravings and wants which such men can neither comprehend nor discern. Consequently the external manifestation is not understood, and relief is beyond their skill. In all the volumes which have been written by that class of men, and in all their platform orations, put together, there is not as much sound philosophy (to say nothing of a higher kind of wisdom,) as we have in this one saying of the gracious Redeemer, “ Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Oh, who, that is not spiritually blind, and therefore, ignorant of man's real wants, could trifle with such a subject as we have now before us ? Lift up your eyes, and see that immense concourse of human beings. There are old and young ; there are mothers carrying their infant children, and leading others by the hand, who are now weak through sickness, or famishing for want of food. There are others borne along by their relatives they are sinking under disease which has terminated the earthly existence of not a few, since they set out on their pilgrimage. And now do you ask—who are these and whence have they come ? and for what perpose ? I answer, that company numbering perhaps 50,000 are our brethren.—They are natives of India, subjects of Queen Victoria, who professed lately, in addressing them, her belief in the Religion of Jesus ; and acknowledged, with gratitude, its power to so-lace and cheer the soul ;” They have come, some of them, ten—some of them fifteen hundred miles—bearing up against accidents, infection, sickness, even braving death—that they may reach the point where two of their sacred rivers meet—sure that if they can bathe there at the right moment, all their past sins will be washed away, and themselves admitted to a place of future happiness.

Now mark the earnestness of that assembled throng. Poor sufferers, on the edge of the celebrated pool of Bethesda, never manifested more anxiety to bathe in those waters to which God imparted, for a special purpose, a healing virtue, than do these wretched Hindoos exhibit to cast themselves into the sacred stream which their Priest has told them conveys spiritual healing. The signal is now given, warning them that the proper time has arrived and the living mass is in motion—each one struggling to be before his fellow. Alas! There are many in that crowd, who, after all their toils in reaching the edge of the water, are doomed to dissappointment. Too weak to resist the pressure, they are trampled under foot and killed, or crushed to death, standing upright, while many of those who reach the stream are drowned. When that company leaves the shore, they will leave behind them from one to two hundred corpses, in addition to all that have perished, since they set out on their weary pilgrimage.

My Friends, this is Hindooism, as witnessed by those who have lived in that country. Whether this betokens spiritual peace, and satisfaction with their much lauded and ancient forms of faith, judge ye. Oh that they could hear of the "blood that cleanseth from all sin." Then justified by faith, they might have peace with God? and rejoice in anticipation of a blessed immortality.

Hark what mean those lamentations,
 Rolling sadly through the sky?
 'Tis the cry of heathen nations—
 "Come and help us, or we die!"
 Hear the heathens' sad complaining
 Christians! hear their dying cry:
 And the love of Christ constraining,
 Haste to help them, ere they die."

Can we, my hearers, hesitate respecting the duty of the christian world toward India? Is it not plain that they need the Word of God to enlighten them—to raise them to a higher position, as members of society—and, above all, to purify their hearts, and prepare them for a future state of existence.

"Publish to that barbarous nation
 Peace and pardon from our God;
 Tell the heathen
None but Christ can do them good."

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